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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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JOHN G. NICOLAY.

*Given to George John Stollman  
Nov 1865*

[Price, 25 Cents.]

no 699



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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY

JOHN G. NICOLAY.



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1882.

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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865), sixteenth president of the United States of America, was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809. His father, Thomas Lincoln, and his mother, Nancy Hanks, were both natives of Virginia, as was also his paternal grandfather, whose ancestors came from Berks County, Pennsylvania. When Lincoln was eight years of age his father moved to Indiana, in what is now Spencer County. The region was still a wilderness, and the boy grew up in pioneer life, dwelling in a rude log-cabin, and knowing but the primitive manners, conversation, and ambitions of sparsely settled backwood neighborhoods. Schools were rare, and teachers only qualified to impart the merest rudiments of instruction. "Of course when I came of age I did not know much," wrote the future president; "still somehow I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity." In 1818 his mother died, and his father a year afterwards married again. When nineteen years of age Lincoln made a journey as a hired hand on a flatboat to New Orleans. In 1830 his father emigrated to Macon County, Illinois, and Lincoln aided in building the cabin, clearing a field, and splitting rails to fence it. The locality proved unhealthy, and general sickness made them resolve to abandon it. Being now twenty-one years of

age, Lincoln hired himself to one Offutt, in Sangamon County, assisting him to build a flatboat and float it down the Sangamon, Illinois, and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. Afterwards Offutt made him clerk of his country store at New Salem. This gave him moments of leisure to begin self-education. He borrowed a grammar and other books, and sought explanations from the village schoolmaster. Next year the Black Hawk Indian War broke out; Lincoln volunteered in one of the Sangamon County companies, and was elected captain. He was already a candidate for the Illinois legislature when this occurred; his printed address "To the people of Sangamon County" bears date March 9, 1832, and betokens talent and education far beyond mere ability to "read, write, and cipher." The Black Hawk campaign lasted about three months; Lincoln shared the hardships of camp and march, but was in no battle. He was defeated for the legislature that summer, being yet a comparative stranger in the county, but received a flattering majority in his own election precinct, where also, a little later, local friendship, disregarding politics, procured his appointment as postmaster of New Salem. The purchase and failure of a small country store having burdened him with debt, the county surveyor of Sangamon opportunely offered to make him one of his deputies. He qualified himself by study in all haste, and entered upon the practical duties of surveying farm lines, roads, and town sites. "This," to use his own words, "procured bread, and kept body and soul together."

The year 1834 had now arrived, and Lincoln was chosen one of the members of the Illinois legislature. He was re-elected successively in 1836, 1838, and 1840, after which he declined further nomination. At the two latter terms he received the complimentary vote of his party friends for Speaker, they being in the minority. During the canvass of 1834 his political friend and colleague, John T. Stuart, a lawyer in full practice, strongly encouraged him to study law, and lent him text-books to begin his reading. Lincoln followed his

advice, and, working diligently, was admitted to the bar in the autumn of 1836. On April 15, 1837, he quitted New Salem and removed to Springfield, which was then the county seat, but soon after became the capital of the State, to begin practice in partnership with his friend Stuart. His legislative experience was still further enlarged by his service of one term as representative to the Congress of the United States, to which he was elected in August, 1846. He had become an eloquent and influential public speaker, and in several campaigns was on his party ticket as Whig candidate for presidential elector. Though to some extent still mingling in politics, Lincoln now for a period of about five years devoted himself more exclusively to the study and practice of law, his repeated successes drawing him into the most important cases.

In 1854 began the great slavery agitation by the repeal of the slavery prohibition of 1820, called the Missouri Compromise. Aroused to new activity by what he regarded as a gross breach of political faith, Lincoln entered upon public discussions with an earnestness and force that by common consent gave him leadership of the opposition in Illinois, which that year elected a majority of the legislature. This would have secured his election to the United States Senate, in the winter of 1854, to succeed Shields, a Democrat; but four opposition members, of Democratic antecedents, refused to vote for Lincoln, who was yet called a Whig, and by their persistence compelled the election of Trumbull. The Republican party of Illinois was formally organized in 1856; the campaign resulted substantially in a drawn battle, the Democrats gaining a majority in the State for president, while the Republicans elected the governor and State officers. In 1858 the senatorial term of Douglas, author of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was expiring, and he sought re-election. Lincoln, who had four years before successfully met him in public debate, was now by unanimous resolution of the Republican State Convention designated as his rival and opponent. Yielding to the wish of his party friends,

Lincoln challenged Douglas to a joint public discussion. The antagonists met in debate at seven designated points in the State, while they also separately addressed audiences in nearly every one of the hundred counties. At the November election the Republicans received a majority in the popular vote, but the Democrats, through a favorable apportionment of representative districts, secured a majority of the legislature, which re-elected Douglas. This remarkable campaign excited the closest attention from every part of the Union. Lincoln, addressing the convention which nominated him, June 16, 1858, opened the discussion with the following bold prophecy:—

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, — old as well as new, North as well as South.”

Lincoln's speeches in this campaign won him a national fame, which was greatly increased by several made in Ohio the following year, and especially by his Cooper Institute address in New York City, February 27, 1860. More than any contemporary statesman he had, in the long six years' agitation, insisted that, transcending the technical point of constitutional authority, or the problem of public policy, the deeper question of human right and wrong lay at the bottom of the slavery controversy.

The Republican National Convention, which made “No Extension of Slavery” its principal tenet, met at Chicago, May 16, 1860. Seward was the leading candidate; but the more conservative delegates opposed him as being too radical, and, uniting their forces, nominated Lincoln, who was elected president of the United States after an unusually animated political campaign,

November 6, 1860,<sup>1</sup> and inaugurated at Washington, March 4, 1861. Meanwhile a formidable movement, begun by South Carolina a month before the November election, and based on the slavery agitation, had carried the Slave States South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas into secession. A provisional government under the designation "The Confederate States of America," with Jefferson Davis as president, was organized by the seceding States, who seized by force nearly all the forts, arsenals, and public buildings within their limits. Great division of sentiment existed in the North, whether in this emergency acquiescence or coercion was the preferable policy. Lincoln's inaugural address declared the Union perpetual and acts of secession void, and announced the determination of the Government to defend its authority, and to hold the forts and places yet in its possession. On the other hand he disclaimed any intention to invade, subjugate, or oppress the seceding States. "You can have no conflict," he said, "without being yourselves the aggressors." Fort Sumpter in Charleston Harbor had been besieged by the secessionists since January; and it being now on the point of surrender through starvation, Lincoln sent the besiegers official notice on April 8 that a fleet was on its way to carry provisions to the fort, but that he would not attempt to reinforce it unless this effort were resisted. The Confederates, however, immediately ordered its reduction, and after a thirty-four hours' bombardment the garrison capitulated, April 13, 1861.

With civil war thus provoked, Lincoln, on April 15, by proclamation called 75,000 three months' militia under arms, and on May 4 ordered the further enlistment of 64,748 soldiers and 18,000 seamen for three years' service. He instituted a blockade of the Southern

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<sup>1</sup> The popular vote cast for electors stood: Lincoln, 1,866,462; Douglas, 1,375,157; Breckinridge, 847,953; Bell, 590,631. The official vote cast by the electors on December 5, 1860, and counted and declared by Congress on February 13, 1861, was: Lincoln, 180; Breckinridge, 72; Bell, 39; Douglas, 12.†



ports, took effective steps to extemporize a navy, convened Congress in special session, and asked for legislation and authority to make the war "short, sharp, and decisive." The country responded with enthusiasm to his summons and suggestions; and the South on its side was not less active. The Sumter bombardment rapidly developed and increased the limits of insurrection. Four additional Slave States drifted into secession; the Unionists maintained ascendancy in Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, and succeeded in dividing Virginia. Minor engagements soon took place between the opposing forces; and on July 21, 1861, the first important battle was fought at Bull Run, and resulted in the defeat and panic of the Unionists.

The slavery question presented vexatious difficulties in conducting the war. Acute observers could not fail to note that its gigantic agencies were beginning to work in the direction of practical abolition. Congress in August, 1861, passed an Act confiscating rights of slave-owners to slaves employed in hostile service against the Union. On August 31 General Fremont by military order declared martial law and confiscation against active enemies, with freedom to their slaves, in the State of Missouri. Believing that under existing conditions such a step was both detrimental in present policy and unauthorized in law, President Lincoln directed him to modify the order to make it conform to the Confiscation Act of Congress. Strong political factions were instantly formed for and against military emancipation, and the Government was hotly beset by antagonistic counsel. The Unionists of the Border Slave States were greatly alarmed, but Lincoln by his moderate conservatism held them to the military support of the Government. Meanwhile he sagaciously prepared the way for the supreme act of statesmanship which the gathering national crisis already dimly foreshadowed. On March 6, 1862, he sent a special message to Congress recommending the passage of a resolution offering pecuniary aid from the general government to induce States to adopt gradual abolishment of slavery.

Promptly passed by Congress, the resolution produced no immediate result except in its influence on public opinion. A practical step, however, soon followed. In April Congress passed and the President approved an Act emancipating slaves in the District of Columbia, with compensation to owners — a measure which Lincoln had proposed when in Congress in 1849. Meanwhile slaves of loyal masters were constantly escaping to military camps. Some commanders excluded them altogether; others surrendered them on demand; while still others sheltered and protected them against their owners. Lincoln tolerated this latitude as falling properly within the military discretion pertaining to local army operations. A new case, however, soon demanded his official interference. On the 9th of May, 1862, General Hunter, commanding in the limited areas gained along the southern coast, issued a short order declaring his department under martial law, and adding: "Slavery and martial law in a free country are altogether incompatible. The persons in these three States — Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina — heretofore held as slaves, are, therefore declared for ever free." As soon as this order, by the slow method of communication by sea, reached the newspapers, Lincoln, May 19, published a proclamation declaring it void; adding further: "Whether it be competent for me, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, to declare the slaves of any State or States free, and whether at any time or in any case it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the Government to exercise such supposed power, are questions which under my responsibility I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field. These are totally different questions from those of police regulations in armies or camps." But in the same proclamation Lincoln recalled to the public his own proposal, and the assent of Congress, to compensate States which would adopt voluntary and gradual abolishment. "To the people of these States now," he added, "I most earnestly ap-

peal. I do not argue,—I beseech you to make the argument for yourselves. You cannot, if you would, be blind to the signs of the times.” Meanwhile, the antislavery sentiment of the North constantly increased. During June, Congress, by express Act, prohibited the existence of slavery in all territories outside of States. On July 12 the President called the representatives of the Border Slave States to the executive mansion, and once more urged upon them his proposal of compensated emancipation. “If the war continues long,” he said, “as it must if the object be not sooner attained, the institution in your States will be extinguished by mere friction and abrasion—by the mere incidents of the war. It will be gone, and you will have nothing valuable in lieu of it.” While Lincoln’s appeal brought the Border States to no practical decision, it served to prepare public opinion for his final act. During the month of July his own mind reached the virtual determination to give slavery its *coup de grace*, and he wrote and submitted to his cabinet the draft of an emancipation proclamation substantially as afterward issued. Serious military reverses constrained him for the present to withhold it, while on the other hand they served to increase the pressure upon him from antislavery men. Horace Greeley having addressed a public letter to him complaining of “the policy you seem to be pursuing with regard to the slaves of the rebels,” the President replied, August 22, saying: “My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.” Thus still holding back violent reformers with one hand, and leading up halting conservatives with the other, he on September 13 replied, among other things, to an address from a delegation: “I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative, like the Pope’s Bull against the Comet. . . . I view this matter

as a practical war measure, to be decided on according to the advantages or disadvantages it may offer to the suppression of the Rebellion. . . . I have not decided against a proclamation of liberty to the slaves, but hold the matter under advisement."

The year 1862 had opened with important Union victories. Grant captured Forts Henry and Donelson, and won the Battle of Shiloh. Burnside took possession of Roanoke Island, on the North Carolina coast. The famous contest between the new ironclads, *Monitor* and *Merrimae*, ended in the Confederate vessel being beaten back, crippled, and ultimately destroyed. Farragut, with a wooden fleet, ran past the twin forts, St. Philip and Jackson, compelled the surrender of New Orleans, and gained control of the lower Mississippi. These successes extended from January to April. The succeeding three months brought disaster and discouragement to the Union army. McClellan's campaign against Richmond was made abortive by his bad generalship, and compelled the withdrawal of his army. Pope's army, advancing against the same city by another line, was beaten back upon Washington in defeat. The tide of war, however, once more turned, in the defeat of Lee's invading army, at South Mountain and Antietam, in Maryland, on the 14th and 17th of September, compelling him to retreat.

With public opinion thus ripened by alternate defeat and victory, President Lincoln, on September 22, 1862, issued his preliminary proclamation of emancipation, giving notice that on the 1st of January, 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." In his message to Congress on the 1st of December following, he again urged his plan of gradual, compensated emancipation, "as a means, not in exclusion of, but additional to, all others for restoring and preserving the national authority throughout the Union." On the first day of January, 1863, the final proclamation of emancipation

was duly issued, designating the States of Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and certain portions of Louisiana and Virginia as "this day in rebellion against the United States," and proclaiming that, in virtue of his authority as commander-in-chief, and as a necessary war measure for suppressing rebellion, "I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and henceforward shall be free," and pledging the executive and military power of the Government to maintain such freedom. The legal validity of these proclamations was never pronounced upon by the national courts; but their decrees, gradually enforced by the march of armies, were soon recognized by public opinion to be practically irreversible. Such dissatisfaction as they caused in the Border Slave States died out in the stress of war. The systematic enlistment of negroes, and their incorporation into the army by regiments, hitherto only tried as exceptional experiments, were now pushed with vigor, and, being followed by several conspicuous instances of their gallantry on the battlefield, added another strong impulse to the sweeping change of popular sentiment. To put the finality of emancipation beyond all question, Lincoln, in the winter session of 1863-64, strongly supported a movement in Congress to abolish slavery by Constitutional Amendment, but the necessary two-thirds vote of the House could not then be obtained. In his Annual Message of December 6, 1864, he urged the immediate passage of the measure. Congress now acted promptly. On January 31, 1865, that body, by joint resolution, proposed to the States the Thirteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution, providing that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Before the end of that year, twenty-seven out of the thirty-six States of the Union (being the required three fourths) had ratified the amendment, and official proclamation, made December 18, 1865, declared it duly adopted.



The foreign policy of President Lincoln, while subordinate in importance to the great questions of the Civil War, nevertheless presented several difficult and critical problems for his decision. Towards the close of 1861 the arrest by Captain Wilkes of two Confederate envoys proceeding to Europe in the British steamer *Trent* seriously threatened peace with England. Public opinion in America almost unanimously sustained the act; but Lincoln, convinced that the proceeding had been unlawful, promptly, upon the suggestion of England, ordered the liberation of the prisoners. A still broader foreign question grew out of Mexican affairs, when events, culminating in the setting up of Maximilian of Austria as Emperor, under the protection of French troops, demanded the constant watchfulness of the United States. Lincoln's course was one of prudent moderation. France voluntarily declared that she sought in Mexico only to satisfy injuries done her, and not to overthrow or establish local government, or to appropriate territory. The United States Government replied that, relying on these assurances, it would maintain strict non-intervention,—at the same time openly avowing the general sympathy of its people with a Mexican republic, and that “their own safety, and the cheerful destiny to which they aspire, are intimately dependent on the continuance of free republican institutions throughout America.” In the early part of 1863 the French Government proposed a mediation between the North and the South. This offer President Lincoln declined to consider, Seward replying for him that it would only be entering into diplomatic discussion with the Rebels whether the authority of the Government should be renounced, and the country delivered over to disunion and anarchy.

The Civil War gradually grew to dimensions beyond all expectation. By January, 1863, the Union armies numbered near a million men, and were kept up to this strength till the end of the struggle. The Federal war debt eventually reached the sum of \$2,700,000,000. The fortunes of battle were somewhat fluctuating dur-

ing the first half of 1863, but the beginning of July brought the Union forces decisive victories. The reduction of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, with other operations, restored complete control of the Mississippi, severing the Southern Confederacy. In the East, Lee had the second time marched his army into Pennsylvania, to suffer a disastrous defeat at Gettysburg on July 1-3, though he was able to withdraw his shattered forces south of the Potomac. At the dedication of this battlefield as a soldiers' cemetery in November, President Lincoln made the following oration, which has taken permanent place as a classic in American literature:—

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

In the unexpected prolongation of the war, volunteer enlistments became too slow to replenish the waste of armies, and in 1863 the Government was forced to resort to a draft. The enforcement of the conscription created much opposition in various parts of the country, and led to a serious riot in the city of New York on July 13. President Lincoln executed the draft with all possible justice and forbearance, but refused every im-



portunity to postpone it. It was made a special subject of criticism by the Democratic party of the North, which was now organizing itself, on the basis of a discontinuance of the war, to endeavor to win the presidential election of the following year. Mr. Vallandigham of Ohio, having made a violent public speech against the war and military proceedings, was arrested by General Burnside, tried by military commission, and sentenced to imprisonment; a writ of *habeas corpus* was refused, and the sentence was changed by the President to transportation beyond the military lines. By way of political defiance, the Democrats of Ohio nominated Vallandigham for governor. Prominent Democrats and a committee of the convention having appealed for his release, Lincoln wrote two long letters in reply, discussing the constitutional question, and declaring that, in his judgment, the president, as commander-in-chief in time of rebellion or invasion, holds the power and responsibility of suspending the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*, but offering to release Vallandigham if the committee would sign a declaration that rebellion exists, that an army and navy are constitutional means to suppress it, and that each of them would use his personal power and influence to prosecute the war. This liberal offer, and their refusal to accept it, counteracted all the political capital they hoped to make out of the case; and public opinion was still more powerfully influenced in behalf of the President's action, by the pathos of the query which he propounded in one of his letters: "Must I shoot the simple-minded soldier-boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?" When the election took place in Ohio, Vallandigham was defeated by a majority of more than a hundred thousand.

Many unfounded rumors of a willingness on the part of the Confederate States to make peace were circulated from time to time to weaken the Union war spirit. To all such suggestions, up to the time of issuing his emancipation proclamation, Lincoln an-

nounced his readiness to stop fighting and grant amnesty whenever they would submit to and maintain the national authority under the constitution of the United States. Certain agents in Canada having, in 1864, intimated that they were empowered to treat for peace, Lincoln, through Greeley, tendered them safe conduct to Washington. They were by this forced to confess that they possessed no authority to negotiate. The President thereupon sent them, and made public, the following standing offer:—

“To whom it may concern:—

Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States, will be received and considered by the Executive Government of the United States, and will be met by liberal terms on substantial and collateral points, and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe conduct both ways.

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

“July 18, 1864.”

A noteworthy conference on this question took place near the close of the Civil War, when the strength of the Rebellion was almost exhausted. F. P. Blair, senior, a personal friend of Jefferson Davis, acting solely on his own responsibility, was permitted to go from Washington to Richmond, where, after a private and unofficial interview, Davis, in writing, declared his willingness to enter a conference “to secure peace to the two countries.” Report being duly made to President Lincoln, he wrote a note consenting to receive any agent sent informally “with a view of securing peace to the people of our common country.” Upon the basis of this latter proposition, three Confederate commissioners finally came to Hampton Roads, where President Lincoln and Secretary Seward met them, and on February 3, 1865, an informal conference of four hours’ duration was held. Private reports of the interview agree substantially in the statement that the Confederates proposed a cessation of the Civil War, and postponement of its issues for future adjustment; while for the present the belli-

gerents should unite in a campaign to expel the French from Mexico, and to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. President Lincoln, however, declined the ensnaring alliance and adhered to the instructions he had given Seward before deciding to personally accompany him. These formulated three indispensable conditions to adjustment: first, the restoration of the national authority throughout all the States; second, no receding by the executive of the United States on the slavery question; third, no cessation of hostilities short of an end of the war and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the Government. These terms the commissioners were not authorized to accept, and the interview ended without result.

As Lincoln's first presidential term of four years neared its end, the Democratic party gathered itself for a supreme effort to regain the ascendancy lost in 1860. The slow progress of the war, the severe sacrifice of life in campaign and battle, the enormous accumulation of public debt, arbitrary arrests and suspension of *habeas corpus*, the rigor of the draft, and the proclamation of military emancipation furnished ample subjects of bitter and vindictive campaign oratory. A partisan coterie which surrounded McClellan loudly charged the failure of his Richmond campaign to official interference in his plans. Vallandigham had returned to his home in defiance of his banishment beyond military lines, and was leniently suffered to remain. The aggressive spirit of the party, however, pushed it to a fatal extreme. The Democratic National Convention adopted, August 29, 1864, a resolution declaring the war a failure, and demanding a cessation of hostilities. It nominated McClellan for president, and instead of adjourning *sine die*, as usual, remained organized, and subject to be convened at any time and place by the executive national committee. This threatening attitude, in conjunction with alarming indications of a conspiracy to resist the draft, had the effect to thoroughly consolidate the war party, which had on June 8 unanimously renominated Lincoln. At the election held

November 8, 1864, Lincoln received 2,216,076 of the popular votes, and M'Clellan but 1,808,725; while of the presidential electors 212 voted for Lincoln and 21 for M'Clellan. Lincoln's second term of office began March 4, 1865.

While this political contest was going on, the Civil War was being brought to a decisive close. Grant, at the head of the army of the Potomac, followed Lee from before Washington to Richmond and Petersburg, and held him in siege to within a few days of final surrender. Sherman, commanding the bulk of the Union forces in the Mississippi Valley, swept in a victorious march through the heart of the Confederacy, to Savannah on the coast, and thence northward to North Carolina. Lee evacuated Richmond April 2, and was overtaken by Grant and compelled to surrender his entire army April 9, 1865. Sherman pushed Johnston to a surrender April 26. This ended the war, the submission of scattering detachments following soon after.

Lincoln being at the time on a visit to the army, entered Richmond the day after its surrender. Returning to Washington, he made his last public address on the evening of April 11, devoted mainly to the question of reconstructing loyal governments in the conquered States. On the evening of April 14 he attended Ford's Theatre in Washington. While seated with his family and friends, absorbed in the play, John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who with others had prepared a plot to assassinate the several heads of Government, went into the little corridor leading to the upper stage-box, and secured it against ingress by a wooden bar. Then, stealthily entering the box, he discharged a pistol at the head of the President from behind, the ball penetrating the brain. Brandishing a huge knife, with which he wounded Colonel Rathbone who attempted to hold him, the assassin rushed through the stage-box to the front and leaped down upon the stage, escaping behind the scenes and from the rear of the building, but was pursued, and twelve days afterwards shot in a barn where he had concealed himself. The wounded Presi-

dent was borne to a house across the street, where he breathed his last at 7 A.M., April 15, 1865.

In 1842 he had married Mary Todd, also of Kentucky, who bore him four children. Only one son, Robert T. Lincoln, survives, who is at this date, 1882, Secretary of War of the United States.

President Lincoln was of unusual stature, six feet four inches, and of spare but muscular build; he had been in youth remarkably strong and skilful in the athletic games of the frontier, where, however, his popularity and recognized impartiality oftener made him an umpire than a champion. He had regular and prepossessing features, dark complexion, broad, high forehead, prominent cheek bones, gray, deep-set eyes, and bushy, black hair, turning to gray at the time of his death. Abstemious in his habits, he possessed great physical endurance. He was almost as tender-hearted as a woman. "I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom," he was able to say. His patience was inexhaustible. He had naturally a most cheerful and sunny temper, was highly social and sympathetic, loved pleasant conversation, wit, anecdote, and laughter. Beneath this, however, ran an undercurrent of sadness; he was occasionally subject to hours of deep silence and introspection that approached a condition of trance. In manner he was simple, direct, void of the least affectation, and entirely free from awkwardness, oddity, or eccentricity. His mental qualities were a quick analytic perception, strong logical powers, a tenacious memory, a liberal estimate and tolerance of the opinions of others, ready intuition of human nature; and perhaps his most valuable faculty was rare ability to divest himself of all feeling or passion in weighing motives of persons or problems of state. His speech and diction were plain, terse, forcible. Relating anecdotes with appreciative humor and fascinating dramatic skill, he used them freely and effectively in conversation and argument. He loved manliness, truth, and justice. He despised all trickery and selfish greed. In arguments



at the bar he was so fair to his opponent that he frequently appeared to concede away his client's case. He was ever ready to take blame on himself and bestow praise on others. "I claim not to have controlled events," he said, "but confess plainly that events have controlled me." The Declaration of Independence was his political chart and inspiration. He acknowledged a universal equality of human rights. "Certainly the negro is not our equal in color," he said, "perhaps not in many other respects; still, in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black." He had unchanging faith in self-government. "The people," he said, "are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution." Yielding and accommodating in non-essentials, he was inflexibly firm in a principle or position deliberately taken. "Let us have faith that right makes might," he said, "and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it." The Emancipation Proclamation once issued, he reiterated his purpose never to retract or modify it. "There have been men base enough," he said, "to propose to me to return to slavery our black warriors of Port Hudson and Olustee, and thus win the respect of the masters they fought. Should I do so, I should deserve to be damned in time and eternity. Come what will, I will keep my faith with friend and foe." Benevolence and forgiveness were the very basis of his character; his world-wide humanity is aptly embodied in a phrase of his second inaugural: "with malice toward none, with charity for all." His nature was deeply religious, but he belonged to no denomination; he had faith in the eternal justice and boundless mercy of Providence, and made the Golden Rule of Christ his practical creed. History must accord him a rare sagacity in guiding a great people through the perils of a mighty revolution, an admirable singleness of aim, a skilful discernment and courageous seizure of the golden moment to free

his nation from the incubus of slavery, faithful adherence to law, and conscientious moderation in the use of power, a shining personal example of honesty and purity, and finally the possession of that subtle and indefinable magnetism by which he subordinated and directed dangerously disturbed and perverted moral and political forces to the restoration of peace and constitutional authority to his country, and the gift of liberty to four millions of human beings. Architect of his own fortunes, rising with every opportunity, mastering every emergency, fulfilling every duty, he not only proved himself pre-eminently the man for the hour, but the signal benefactor of posterity. As statesman, ruler, and liberator, civilization will hold his name in perpetual honor.









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